

# **Religion, Culture, and Radicalism**

## **(Moderation Strategies in Multicultural Societies in An Era of Disruption)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research is driven by the urgent need to formulate religion- and culture-based moderation strategies as preventive and counter-radicalization efforts, particularly in light of the rising threat of intolerance and extremism in Indonesia. The primary aim of this study is to identify the contributing factors of radicalism in multicultural societies and to formulate effective and applicable moderation strategies within the framework of the disruptive era. This study employs a qualitative method using a moderative, religious, and cross-cultural approach, guided by Creswell's framework. Data sources include scholarly literature, government policy documents (e.g., from Kemenag and BNPT), and digital religious-cultural content from social media and online platforms. Data collection was conducted through document analysis and digital observation using purposive sampling to ensure relevance to issues of radicalism and moderation in Indonesia. The data were analyzed thematically, following Creswell's steps: organizing data, reading for general meaning, coding, developing themes, interpreting findings, and presenting results. The findings reveal that radicalism arises from weak religious literacy, cultural exclusivism, and social inequality, all of which are exacerbated by digital disinformation. Effective moderation strategies must include strengthening multicultural education, promoting interfaith dialogue, involving local religious and cultural leaders, and utilizing digital media for tolerance and inclusivity campaigns. Academically, this study holds strong urgency in enriching scientific discourse on religion and cross-cultural understanding and radicalism and in developing a contextual interdisciplinary approach for fostering a peaceful society amid the challenges of globalization.

**Keywords** : Religious Moderation; Multicultural Society; Radicalism; Religious and Cross-Cultural; and Era of Disruption

### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh kebutuhan mendesak untuk merumuskan strategi moderasi berbasis agama dan budaya sebagai upaya preventif dan penanggulangan radikalisme, khususnya di tengah meningkatnya ancaman intoleransi dan ekstremisme di Indonesia. Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor penyebab radikalisme dalam masyarakat multikultural serta merumuskan strategi moderasi yang efektif dan aplikatif dalam kerangka era disrupsi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan moderatif, keagamaan, dan lintas budaya yang mengacu pada kerangka kerja Creswell. Sumber data mencakup literatur ilmiah, dokumen kebijakan pemerintah (misalnya dari Kementerian Agama dan BNPT), serta konten digital keagamaan dan kebudayaan dari media sosial dan platform daring. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui analisis dokumen dan observasi digital dengan teknik purposive sampling untuk memastikan relevansi dengan isu radikalisme dan moderasi di Indonesia. Analisis data dilakukan secara tematik dengan mengikuti langkah-langkah Creswell: mengorganisasi data, membaca secara menyeluruh, melakukan pengkodean, mengembangkan tema, menafsirkan temuan, dan menyajikan hasil. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa radikalisme muncul akibat lemahnya literasi keagamaan, eksklusivisme budaya, dan ketimpangan sosial, yang semuanya diperburuk oleh disinformasi digital. Strategi moderasi yang efektif harus mencakup penguatan pendidikan multikultural, promosi dialog lintas iman, pelibatan tokoh agama dan budaya lokal, serta pemanfaatan media digital untuk kampanye toleransi dan inklusivitas. Secara akademik, penelitian ini memiliki urgensi tinggi dalam memperkaya wacana ilmiah tentang agama, pemahaman lintas budaya, dan radikalisme, serta dalam mengembangkan pendekatan interdisipliner yang kontekstual guna membangun masyarakat yang damai di tengah tantangan globalisasi.

### **Kata Kunci**

**Kata Kunci** : Moderasi Beragama; Masyarakat Multikultural; Radikalisme; Agama-lintas budaya, dan Era Disrupsi

## INTRODUCTION

Radicalization has become one of the most pressing challenges faced by global societies in the disruptive era, where the rapid and unfiltered flow of information often amplifies extremist narratives (Ali, 2020; Fariduddin, 2024). In Indonesia, a multicultural nation with a Muslim-majority population and constitutionally recognized religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity, radicalization poses not only a security threat but also a serious challenge to social cohesion and national unity. The disruptive impact of digital technology accelerates the spread of extremist ideologies through social media and online platforms, creating complex challenges for the state, educational institutions, religious leaders, and civil society (Fariduddin, 2024).

In this context, religious moderation (*wasatiyyah*) emerges as a critical strategy for countering radicalism. This approach emphasizes balance, tolerance, and respect for diversity, principles that align with core Islamic teachings grounded in justice, compassion, and peace (Fariduddin, 2022; Zain, 2021). However, moderation strategies that focus solely on normative religious discourse often fail to reach grassroots communities effectively, especially when they are not contextualized within local sociocultural values. Indigenous traditions such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *musyawarah* (deliberation), and interfaith tolerance are valuable social assets that can strengthen religious moderation efforts (Achmad, 2022).

This study is motivated by an academic concern over the limited effectiveness of current religious moderation strategies, particularly in addressing the growing influence of radicalism among younger generations who experience identity crises and are highly exposed to digital radical content (Widiastuti, 2021). Therefore, the main objective of this research is to identify the key contributing factors to radicalism in Indonesia's multicultural society and to formulate a religion- and culture-based moderation strategy that is contextually relevant and practically applicable in the disruptive era. Through an interdisciplinary approach, this study aims to contribute to the development of a more responsive and localized model of religious moderation to foster peace and pluralism in contemporary Indonesia.

Over the past four years, research on religious moderation and radicalization prevention in Indonesia has developed across several thematic areas. First, there is a growing body of work focusing on digital strategies for moderation, such as the study by Mandala, Witro, and Juraidi (2024), which analyzes how online platforms can be optimized to promote inclusive paradigms, moderate narratives, content validation, and the empowerment of millennials as digital ambassadors of moderation (Mandala et al., 2024). However, this study remains conceptual and literature-based, lacking empirical validation in real multicultural community settings.

Second, studies have examined local cultural integration in promoting religious harmony, such as the fieldwork by Hariono and Isnaini (2023) in Banyuwangi, which shows how vernacular wisdom and traditional deliberative practices help reduce religious tensions and strengthen social cohesion (Hariono & Isnaini, 2023). While insightful, the study does not address the impact of digital disruption or how such cultural mechanisms interact with online radicalization dynamics.

Third, research has highlighted the role of Islamic mass organizations in countering radicalism. Studies by Efendi et al. (2023) Khamdan and Latifah (2024) explore how Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama engage in social, educational, and economic initiatives to resist extremist ideologies, encourage intra-Muslim dialogue, and reinforce social resilience (Khamdan & Latifah, 2024; "Mainstreaming Religious Moderation in Preventing Radicalisms in Contemporary Indonesia," 2023). Despite their contributions, these studies are largely limited to Muslim communities and have not adequately explored interfaith collaboration in pluralistic contexts.

These three thematic clusters—digital approaches, local cultural practices, and organizational roles—have contributed significantly to the discourse on religious moderation in Indonesia. However, a clear research gap remains in integrating these perspectives into a holistic strategy that addresses radicalism within digitally disrupted, multicultural, and interfaith environments. This study seeks to

fill that gap by combining religious and cultural moderation strategies in the context of digital disruption, with an emphasis on empirical analysis in Indonesia's plural society.

Referring to the previous studies, this research proposes an interdisciplinary approach combining religious and cross-cultural analysis, Islamic legal perspectives, and digital discourse. The model developed will be based on moderate Islamic jurisprudence, local wisdom, and active involvement of digital media users as the front line of tolerant narratives. This strategy model goes beyond theoretical discussions by offering practical guidelines for policymakers, educational institutions, religious leaders, and the public. By integrating religious, cultural, and digital dimensions, this research aspires to be a concrete reference for developing religious and cultural moderation in facing the challenges of disruption and radicalism.

It is crucial to emphasize that religious moderation is not a compromise of Islamic teachings but rather an affirmation of Islam's noble values within an ever-evolving social context. Moderation serves as a means to revitalize the meaning of religion so that it remains relevant, adaptive, and competitive in a global era filled with ideological challenges, especially those posed by transnational ideologies. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide applicable policy recommendations for the government, educational institutions, and society at large in strengthening religious moderation strategies that are contextual and sustainable. Such strategies will become a vital foundation in building an inclusive, harmonious, and resilient Indonesian society against radical influences in the disruption era.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative methodology with a contextual and interdisciplinary approach, in line with Creswell's (2019) model of qualitative research (Creswell, 2019). Qualitative research is used to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups assign to social phenomena, particularly in complex contexts such as radicalism and religious moderation. Rather than relying on statistical analysis, this method focuses on rich, descriptive data obtained from textual, verbal, and behavioral sources. The contextual approach in this study integrates three key perspectives: the religious moderation framework (*wasatiyyah*), local cultural wisdom, and digital religious discourse within Indonesia's multicultural society. These perspectives are used to explore how moderation strategies are constructed and contested in the face of radicalism in a digitally disrupted era.

Data for this study were drawn from various sources, including government policy documents (such as those from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and BNPT), fatwas and religious guidance from Islamic institutions, scholarly publications on moderation and radicalism, and digital content from platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok that present religious narratives. In addition, field data were collected through semi-structured interviews and observations involving religious leaders, educators, youth activists, and interfaith community members engaged in moderation initiatives. The selection of sources and informants was carried out using purposive sampling to ensure relevance and depth in addressing the research focus.

The data analysis process follows the six steps of qualitative analysis outlined by Creswell (2019), beginning with organizing and preparing the data from documents, transcripts, and digital content. The researcher then conducted a thorough reading to gain a general understanding of the material, followed by the process of coding, where significant statements and ideas related to religious interpretation, cultural resilience, and digital contestation were identified. From these codes, themes and sub-themes were developed, including categories such as "inclusive religious interpretation," "local cultural responses," and "digital narratives of moderation versus extremism." These themes were then interpreted in relation to the theoretical frameworks of religious moderation, social integration, and radicalization. The results are presented through descriptive narrative supported by quotations from policy texts, digital discourse, and interview data.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, this study applies source and methodological triangulation by comparing data across various formats and contexts. This ensures a holistic understanding of the complex interplay between religion, culture, and radicalism, and offers practical insights into how religious moderation can be effectively formulated and implemented in Indonesia's plural and digitally connected society.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. The Convergence of Religion and Local Culture in Realising Religious Moderation

In Indonesia's multicultural society, an effective approach to religious moderation does not solely derive from religious texts or normative policies but is also deeply embedded in local cultural practices. The convergence between religious norms and local culture has proven to be a concrete strategy for instilling moderation values at the grassroots level. Rituals such as slametan, tahlilan, and Maulid Nabi celebrations, infused with local symbolism, function as educational mediums that internalize values of tolerance and justice among communities (Subchi et al., 2022). Upon deeper examination, the dynamics of Islam Nusantara in the context of religious moderation in Indonesia show that Islamic teachings practiced through local culture reinforce an inclusive social identity (Fitriansyah & Maksum, 2024).

Religious moderation in Indonesia frequently aligns with local cultural traditions. One of the most representative examples is the *Islam Nusantara* concept promoted by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which emphasizes *wasatiyyah* (the middle path) values and integrates them with local wisdom, including customs, regional languages, and community rituals. Fitriansyah and Maksum (2024) note that the values of tolerance, justice, and humanity, hallmarks of NU moderation, have successfully fostered harmonious and inclusive communities (Fitriansyah & Maksum, 2024).

Historically, Islamic scholars, especially the Wali Songo, have set examples in cultural engagement. As observed by Mubarok and Rustam (2019), the Wali Songo employed culturally adaptive methods of preaching, such as using wayang (traditional puppetry) as a medium of spiritual education. This strategy avoided confrontation and strengthened religious messages by utilizing trusted cultural channels, creating a model of authentic and enduring moderation (Mubarok & Rustam, 2019).

However, the reality is not always smooth. The marginalization of local religious culture has emerged, particularly when puritan-literalist groups view these cultural practices as *bid'ah* (religious innovations) or deviations. Such claims risk transforming moderate cultural expressions into arenas of identity conflict. In response, an interdisciplinary dialogue among religious leaders, cultural practitioners, and scholars is necessary to reaffirm that local cultures, so long as they do not contradict the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, can indeed enrich religious moderation (Auda, 2020).

The concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* bridges religious and cultural values by emphasizing the protection of religion, life, intellect, wealth, and lineage. Jasser Auda (2020) asserts that local cultures that do not undermine these values may be accommodated within the framework of moderate Islamic law. This approach affirms that Islam is not universally exclusive but adaptive to local identities.

Concrete examples of this convergence are evident in interfaith activities in Bali, such as Muslim visits to Hindu temples during Galungan and Hindu participation in Idul Fitri. M. Karim's (2016) case study in Bali reveals that such cultural encounters break down prejudices and foster strong social cohesion. In Ternate and Tidore, the Baramasuwen ritual, a harvest celebration infused with religious prayers, serves as an inclusive social binder: "Through Baramasuwen, indigenous and religious communities find harmony in shared gratitude and tolerance." (Akbar, 2022).

Field research in Sumbersewu village, Banyuwangi, further shows that integrating moderate Islamic teachings (*wasatiyyah*) with Osing customs, such as *selametan* *pekalongan*, *muludan* rituals, and *nyadran* at the tomb of Sunan Giri, creates social resilience against extremism (Hariono & Isnaini, 2023). Cultural activities ground tolerance in daily life: "We can attend *selametan* together, no matter

the religion, as long as we uphold shared wisdom.” Additional studies in Cianjur (West Java) and Central Lampung support Banyuwangi’s findings. In Cianjur, the Seren Taun harvest festival unites Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist communities through joint spiritual events like dzikir and prayer, reflecting inclusive moderate values. In Central Lampung, Chinese and indigenous communities collaborate in celebrating Imlek and Cap Go Meh alongside Muslims, embedding moderation through cultural expression (Kusuma & Pepilina, 2024).

However, in the digital era, the biggest challenge is maintaining the relevance of these converging values. Local religious-cultural content often struggles to compete with the speed and virality of radical and extremist narratives on social media (Setiawan & Stevanus, 2023). Achmad Syariful Afif et al. (2024) discuss moderation narratives via the Muhammadiyah-led platform [Tanwir.ID](#), which uses online forums to promote inclusive Islamic values. Still, collaboration with cultural communities is needed to ensure these messages resonate in the digital lives of the public (Afif et al., 2024).

Translation into educational settings is also crucial; Pratama et al. (2024) show that culture-based religious education modules, such as learning tolerance through the manene ritual (Toraja) or manganan (East Java), have a greater impact on students’ understanding of diversity (Pratama et al., 2024). This model reinforces that the convergence of religion and culture is not merely a theoretical framework but also a practical tool for instilling moderation among younger generations.

Overall, the convergence of religion and local culture represents a highly promising strategy for religious moderation when implemented systematically through cross-sector dialogue, enriched digital content, curriculum integration, and supportive public policy. Amid global pressures and digital information flows, preserving and developing local religious values becomes a strategic and contextual form of cultural moderation. This approach not only strengthens social tolerance but also affirms an adaptive and inclusive religious identity.

## **B. Islamic Law and Efforts to Build Moderation in a Multicultural Society**

Islamic law, commonly referred to as sharia, plays a significant role in shaping the behavior and worldview of Muslims. As a comprehensive system, Islamic teachings aim to create a balanced life that harmonizes spiritual, moral, and social aspects (Esposito, 2021). In the context of preventing radicalization, properly taught Islamic law serves as a powerful bulwark against extremist ideologies. Radicalization often stems from a narrow and erroneous understanding of Islamic law, particularly the misinterpretation of concepts like *jihad* and *takfir* (excommunicating fellow Muslims), which are often manipulated to legitimize violence (Fariduddin, 2024). A more profound and multi-perspective understanding of Islamic law enables Muslims to interpret religious teachings wisely and avoid falling into extremist actions that contradict Islamic values.

One of the most frequently misunderstood concepts by radical groups is jihad. In its true meaning, jihad refers to all forms of effort undertaken in the path of God, not limited to physical warfare but also encompassing spiritual and moral struggle (Fariduddin, 2024). Islamic law frames jihad within strict parameters; armed struggle is permitted only for self-defense and must meet rigorous conditions, such as the protection of non-combatants and the prohibition of destroying civilian infrastructure. Proper understanding of jihad is therefore essential in preventing extremist groups from using it as a narrative to justify violence, especially in a pluralistic society.

To counter radicalism in multicultural societies, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) has been developed through the framework of wasatiyyah (moderation) and the objectives of sharia (maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah). A significant study by Arifin dan Fatkul Chodir (2024) highlights that religious moderation aligns closely with maqāṣid principles, which balance religious freedom with social responsibility and emphasize harmony, tolerance, and concern for the common good (Arifin & Chodir, 2024). This perspective confirms that sharia is not a source of radicalism but rather a tool for establishing peace and justice within diversity.

The application of the *maqāṣid* approach to Islamic law is also reinforced by Rasito and Mahendra (2022), who explored the thought of Yusuf al-Qaradawi and its relevance in Indonesia. They emphasize that moderate *fiqh*, which adapts sharia to social, cultural, and national political contexts, is far removed from extremist doctrines. Al-Qaradawi, considered a proponent of the *wasatiyyah* school, advocates for contextual and benefit-oriented (*maṣlaḥah*) interpretations that align with Pancasila (Rasito & Mahendra, 2022). Through this approach, Islamic law becomes a preventive instrument against radicalism rather than a justification for it.

Alternative implementations of moderate *fiqh* have also been observed in pesantren-based higher education. The study by Muqit et al. (2023) at Mahad Aly Situbondo highlights the role of a multi-madhab, interdisciplinary *fiqh* curriculum in rejecting narrow doctrines. Here, students (*santri*) are encouraged to become active agents in developing contextual and inclusive thinking, rather than passive recipients of rote memorization. This strategy effectively shields students from radical ideologies that claim absolute truth in religious interpretation (Muqit et al., 2023).

Research by Eko Siswanto and Islamy (2022) demonstrates that indicators of religious moderation, such as nationalism, respect for local cultures, and anti-radical attitudes, align closely with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. These values are internalized as forms of protection of human dignity (*ḥifz al-‘ird*) and national welfare (*ḥifz al-waṭan*), especially amidst pluralism and globalization challenges. This approach shifts the narrative of moderation into a normative and measurable domain (Siswanto & Islamy, 2022). Furthermore, the thought of Mohammad Hashim Kamali, as studied by Wildani Hefni et al. (2025), proposes a *wasatiyyah* jurisprudence that emphasizes the flexibility of Islamic law according to social context. His model presents a significant alternative to textual rigidity, often exploited as the basis for radicalism. Kamali advocates for a responsive, contextual, and humanistic *fiqh*, fostering a moderate mindset that respects diversity (Hefni et al., 2025).

To integrate sharia-based moderation values into policy, institutions like BNPT and educational authorities have applied *fiqh siyasah* (political jurisprudence). Tiono Aris (2023) analyzes how BNPT formulates deradicalization policies based on public interest (*maṣlaḥah ‘āmmah*) and governance principles aligned with Islamic ethics. This approach affirms that state intervention against radicalism is not only legitimate in the framework of national law but also ethically justified under sharia, as long as it is implemented fairly and prioritizes public benefit (Aris, 2023).

The *maqāṣid* approach to governance is particularly relevant in Indonesia, providing a foundation for nondiscriminatory public policies that support pluralism. This model can inform the development of religious moderation curricula and community programs. Synthesizing these findings, it becomes clear that Islamic legal approaches that prioritize contextual *fiqh*, *maqāṣid*, and *fiqh siyasah* can strategically pave the way for moderation. Such approaches institutionalize justice, public welfare, and tolerance as structural values, not merely theological doctrines, but as living systems embedded in education and policy, resonating with Indonesia's multicultural reality. This stands as a strong antithesis to radical narratives that claim exclusivity and violence as divine mandates.

Moreover, Islamic law plays a crucial role in fostering social justice and balance, two essential elements in reducing the risk of radicalization. Social injustice is often a key driver of extremism. Through principles like *zakat*, human rights, and laws on social equity, Islam offers solutions to address inequality and public discontent, conditions often exploited by radical groups for recruitment. By prioritizing justice in public life, Islamic law contributes to creating a peaceful and equitable environment, where radicalism finds no fertile ground to thrive.

### **C. Digital Discourse and the Challenges of Religious Narratives in an Era of Disruption**

Since the advent of the digital disruption era, cyberspace has become the main arena of religious discourse, which often also becomes fertile ground for radical narratives. This phenomenon is very apparent in Indonesia, especially as millennials increasingly rely on social media as a primary

reference for religious understanding (Febriani & Ritonga, 2022). In this context, digital religious content appears in two forms: the moderate, which offers dialogue and inclusive understanding, and the radical, which spreads exclusive messages and extreme fanaticism. Thus, the digital disruption era has shifted the ideological battleground from physical spaces to cyberspace, where social media serves as the main stage for the contestation between moderate and radical religious narratives. On one hand, technology provides broad and rapid channels for religious expression, but on the other, it also accelerates the spread of rigid, scripturalist, and even extreme religious ideologies. In this regard, the digital discursive space has become a highly dynamic and often uncontrollable arena for ideological contestation (Afif et al., 2024).

Radical content in cyberspace does not always appear explicitly. Often, it is wrapped in narratives of morality, criticism of authorities, or even discourses of seemingly “pure” religious identity that contain seeds of delegitimization of others (Syamsurrijal et al., 2024). Such strategies have proven effective in attracting the sympathy of young people who are still in the process of searching for religious identity. Conversely, moderate approaches often face obstacles because they are seen as “unappealing,” too theoretical, or lacking a clear common enemy (Mandala et al., 2024), posing a significant challenge in strengthening peaceful religious narratives in the digital era.

One effort to address this issue is strengthening community-based digital da’wah channels. For instance, mosque- and pesantren-based digital literacy movements are increasingly being developed. Pesantrens like Al-Mizan in Jatiwangi and Al-Hikam in Depok have launched YouTube channels and podcasts filled with inclusive religious discussions. They address current topics such as differences between Islamic schools of thought, interfaith tolerance, and Islam as rahmatan lil ‘alamin, all presented in an engaging and accessible format (Pamungkas et al., 2024). This approach not only provides new insights but also forms a counter-discourse to the hardline da’wah that often circulates on social media. Furthermore, research by Ni’mah et al. (2024), at Madrasah Tsanawiyah in Blora shows that networked literacy training modules, with mentoring methods and technology skills, produced students capable of filtering information, rejecting intolerant content, and initiating moderate campaigns in their environments. The next transition occurs when they begin to create their own digital da’wah content, demonstrating significant reinforcement of moderation messages (Ni’mah et al., 2024).

Campaigning through social media requires emotional and shared narrative approaches, shifting from mere message delivery to collective engagement. The community @toleransi.id, for example, uses nonviolence campaign techniques with visual appeal and open dialogue, creating a calming digital atmosphere that counters angry hate narratives (Afif et al., 2024). Research by Wijayanti and Harlis (2024), shows that teenagers and university students can become key agents in spreading moderate narratives when given digital da’wah training directly through TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. They learn to recognize hoaxes, develop peace narratives, and build digital communities aware of pluralism (Wijayanti & Harlis, 2024).

Religious higher education institutions also need to adapt. At UIN Salatiga, for instance, digital literacy development as a foundation for teaching religious moderation strengthens students' abilities to access, evaluate, and produce moderate content (Achmad, 2022). At institutions like UIN Sunan Kalijaga, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, and STAIN Sorong, student groups have been formed to manage YouTube channels, podcasts, and moderate Islamic blogs (Wijayanti & Harlis, 2024). In addition to technical training, students are also encouraged to understand the theological basis of religious moderation, including principles such as wasathiyah (balance), tasamuh (tolerance), and musawah (equality), which are universal values in Islam. Research by Pamungkas et al. (2024) affirms that institutional-level digital literacy, such as in universities and religious organizations, can enhance the quality of moderate content through practices like source-checking, inclusion of citations, and user engagement policies (Pamungkas et al., 2024).

In addition to formal religious institutions, digital discursive approaches are also being widely adopted by independent communities. One example is the platform *@GusdurianNetwork*, which promotes messages of diversity, peace, and interfaith dialogue through multimedia content on social media. They use narrative and storytelling approaches as primary strategies to build empathy and deconstruct stigma between different religious and sectarian groups. In this context, the power of storytelling becomes vital in shaping religious consciousness that is not only textual but also contextual.

Digital literacy is not only essential for lay users but also for influencers and digital religious figures. The account NU Online (*@nuonline\_id*) demonstrates the effectiveness of this platform in conveying da'wah messages and promoting moderation to over 1.1 million followers (Ikrom & Nugraha, 2024). Creative packaging using Instagram features such as carousels, reels, and Q&As has proven to boost engagement and penetrate algorithmic barriers.

Thus, the digital discursive approach developed by institutions such as Nahdlatul Ulama and academic institutions holds a key role. The effectiveness of spreading moderate narratives relies on five pillars: inclusivity, content validity, communication ethics, a pro-moderate style, and empowering millennials as digital ambassadors (Mandala et al., 2024). Through concise content, appealing visuals, and interactivity, such as Instagram infographics, short sermon videos, and online discussion forums, moderate messages can be designed to be more relevant and easily disseminated in the digital ecosystem.

Moreover, the digital discursive approach must also consider aspects of design and social media algorithms. To counter the dominance of radical content that is often more provocative and visually engaging, moderate narratives must also be creative and adaptive. For instance, the use of TikTok as a medium for short da'wah with comedic styles, animations, or reaction videos has already been adopted by several young preachers such as Ustaz Husein Ja'far Al-Hadar, who attracts millions of views without compromising the soothing and educational content. This shows that moderation and creativity are not contradictory but can go hand in hand.

Nevertheless, research by Syaefudin Achmad (2022) found structural obstacles in strengthening moderate digital narratives. These include limited digital infrastructure support in some areas, low digital literacy among religious teachers in schools and madrasahs, and a lack of synergy between religious institutions and the government. Therefore, policies are needed to encourage the integration of religious education, digital media, and human resource capacity building in a systematic manner. The government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has started to launch digital literacy programs based on religious moderation, but these have not fully reached grassroots digital communities (Achmad, 2022).

One notable initiative is the "Religious Influencer" training organized by the Research and Development Center of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in collaboration with the Directorate General of Islamic Guidance and the Ministry of Communication and Information in 2023. This program trained youth from various regions to become religious content creators who are not only tech-savvy but also understand the principles of moderation, pluralism, and communication ethics. This approach successfully created peaceful religious narratives capable of actively competing in the flow of digital information. Digital literacy has proven to be an effective shield in recognizing and combating hate speech on social media through a phased communication design, from prevention to law enforcement (Andriani et al., 2024). A similar study by Sapardiyono et al., also shows that digital literacy plays a crucial role in providing religious communities with critical understanding against radical content from various faiths (Sapardiyono et al., 2024).

Overall, the digital discursive approach to religious moderation requires three main elements: media literacy education, the development of proactive moderate narratives, and cross-platform and community collaboration. Without these three, moderate narratives risk being sidelined by radical content that promises absolute certainty and exclusive identity. Only through critical digital literacy

and inclusive narratives grounded in knowledge and empathy can the digital society grow into a peaceful and moderate plural space.

Over time, we have also witnessed major platforms like Google, Meta, and TikTok beginning to collaborate with religious organizations to suppress radical content and amplify moderate content. However, this collaboration must be followed by independent monitoring systems and accountable algorithmic evaluation. Digital religious moderation is not only a matter of content but also of infrastructure and policy. Without wise regulation, positive content may lose in an algorithmic field that is not neutral.

Considering these various phenomena and initiatives, the digital discursive approach is a necessity in preserving Indonesia's diversity. As the public sphere transforms into the digital realm, religious and da'wah strategies must also be able to transform while remaining grounded in the values of compassion and justice. Through collaboration between the governments, religious organizations, youth, and academics, peaceful and moderate religious narratives will be able to claim their rightful space in the digital world and take root firmly in the real world.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, the conclusion regarding strategies for promoting moderation in multicultural societies during the era of disruption can be summarized into three main points: First, local traditions such as *tahlilan*, *selametan*, and the culture of mutual cooperation (gotong royong) have long served as means of internalizing peaceful and tolerant religious values. When religion is understood and practiced through these local cultural values, communities tend to become more open to differences and less inclined toward extremism; second, the principles of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, such as the preservation of life, intellect, and social harmony, require a legal approach that is just, contextual, and flexible. In a pluralistic society, moderate Islamic law can serve as a moral and ethical foundation for maintaining interreligious harmony, and third, the era of digital disruption significantly impacts how people understand religion, as misinformation, hate speech, and radical ideologies spread rapidly online. Therefore, moderation strategies must also be active in the digital sphere through educational content, peaceful preaching, and strengthened digital literacy so that society is not easily influenced by extremist narratives. In sum, moderation must go beyond mere discourse; it must be brought to life through the synergy of religion, culture, law, and technology. This inclusive and adaptive approach strengthens society's resilience against radicalism and helps maintain social harmony amid diversity.

This research is significant as it offers answers to a pressing challenge in today's Indonesian society: how to prevent radicalism without compromising religious and cultural identity in the digital disruption era. The findings are relevant not only for academic circles but also for policymakers, educators, religious leaders, and the wider public. By presenting integrative and contextual strategies of moderation, this study is expected to make a meaningful contribution to building a peaceful, tolerant, and resilient society in facing digital disruption within a religiously and culturally diverse nation.

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